



Are We There Yet? *Leaving Iowa* Is Sold-Out Hit at Michigan's Purple Rose, to March 13

By [Kenneth Jones](#)
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The bittersweet Midwest-set comedy, *Leaving Iowa*, is a sold-out hit at the [Purple Rose Theatre](#) Company's home in Chelsea, Michigan, where extra performances have been added during the run to March 13.

The world premiere production of Tim Clue and Spike Manton's play about a writer retracing family car trips of the past began performances Jan. 22 toward a Jan. 30 opening by the Equity troupe founded actor-writer Jeff Daniels.

Leaving Iowa is the sort of play Purple Rose focuses on: Human comedies set in the Midwest but expressing universal themes and experiences. The play had a previous developmental staging in the Chicago area. Anthony Caselli directs the Michigan run.

Co-writer Clue said the playwrights are hoping their work gets a wider audience in theatres around the country.

The nationally-recognized Purple Rose Theatre Company presents at 137 Park Street, Chelsea, an hour west of Detroit.

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"*Leaving Iowa* is a warm and nostalgic comedy about a middle-aged writer searching for the perfect spot to scatter his father's ashes," according to production notes. "Along the way, he relives the summer vacations he spent trapped in the family station wagon as a young boy."

PRTC associate artistic director Caselli said in a statement: "The beautiful thing about this play is that through comedy, we see our hero finally reach an understanding: our parents are people just like us, with uncertainties just like us, who make the best choices they can."

"This play is about realizing that the *journey* is as important as the destination. Once that realization sets in, a lot of life becomes about family, reconciliation, and sacrifice. There are moments when you think 'What would I give to go back and live part of that journey just one more time?' The only thing we can do is decide how to live our lives from this point on. That's the part where our parents' sacrifices often influence us the most."

The cast of *Leaving Iowa* includes Teri L. Clark, John Lepard, Jim Porterfield, Elizabeth Ann Townsend and Grant R. Krause. The production design includes set design by Vincent Mountain, costume design by Christianne Myers, lighting design by Dana White, prop design by Danna Segrest and sound design by Quintessa Duffield.

Playwrights Tim Clue & Spike Manton both attended Bradley University in Peoria, IL. After earning his masters degree from Eastern Michigan University, Clue reconnected with Manton in Chicago as their careers in comedy writing and performance began to flourish.

Clue went on to form the Short Story Theatre Co. where he adapted and directed four critically praised original shows from short fiction as Manton parlayed his career in comedy by hosting a weekend radio show in Chicago. Together, they formed Chicago Sitcom as a means to develop their ideas for film, stage and television.

Through this process, *Leaving Iowa* found its way to the Purple Rose Theatre Company.

For information, call (734) 433-ROSE or www.purplerosetheatre.org.

PRTC is the troupe founded by actor-writer Jeff Daniels in his rural hometown, west of Ann Arbor, MI. For more than 10 years the company has presented contemporary plays and many world premieres, becoming one of the most high-profile performing arts companies in the history of Michigan.